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13 May 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Gomez

SUBJECT: Suggested Questions for Leo Cherns

1. I gave Stu Kovins at his request on Monday the 11th, after our meeting with the Director, my suggestions for questions to be asked in the panel discussion Sunday the 17th. I feel sure he will pose these on to Cherns, and I have an OCE Working Group meeting in about ten minutes. He said he wanted to counter-attack, so I suggested his questions fall into four categories:

a. Invasions of other countries with many Cuban rationals (e.g., Panama) and with support to Communist invasion elements (e.g., Dominican Republic, Nicaragua) - effect on professed "non-intervention", anti-Communism.

b. Dictatorship. Is DC aware that Communist allegiance is to Moscow, not Cuba (e.g., Brezhnev's statement that in war Communists would side with Russia against Brazil)? And does it consider Soviet a dictatorship or not? If it does, and it admits Moscow control of Communists in Cuba (note recent Cuban Comrade visit), then is it in favor of a Moscow dictatorship, and against dictatorship only where it capriciously suits it?

c. Free Elections. Is it realized that under Castro's criteria of no elections while there is unemployment or illiteracy, no country (not even the U. S.) would ever have had free elections? Does he know that Moscow also puts off free elections, and that is why it is a dictatorship? What kind of government does he think Cuba will have until the date for free elections is announced?

d. Executions. If a revolutionary movement overthrew 26 July tomorrow, would 500 executions of 26 July people be justified?

2. I briefed him on many other aspects: fact that Blas Roca (Cuba) and Luis Corbalean (Chile) had come out in support of 26 July since the 3 May broadcast; Revolution printing of his broadcast, as contrast to general lack of freedom of press; Revolution attack on Blas Roca, as contrast to general aid to Communists; lack of Communist support in April 1958, 26 July strike which might have been critical; 26 July condemnation of Communists in August 1958; Manuel Mora Valverde (referred to in broadcast) effect on Castro; Drew Pearson column on OCE knowledge of Russian invasion; no better alternatives to Castro yet

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apparent possibility of Castro holding prompt free elections for  
good and staying out and remaining "here", as possible solution  
for Cuba.

3. Stan Croghan said that as of 1630 yesterday (Tuesday 12 May)  
the panel would be Chirne, Mihigo, Lechuga (assistants to Cuban  
Ambassador to US), Porter, with Howard Smith as moderator. Rowins  
will not be on because CBS decided he is a reporter and therefore  
should not debate his own report.

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[R. P. Croghan, Jr.]  
WB/2200

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WB/2200 [Croghan] (13 May 1959)

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Possible Questions

You will recall that a Cuban communist delegate to a meeting in Moscow last January said that his party took an active part and gave guidance to the 26th of July revolution. Later Juan Marinello, who I believe is the head of the Cuban Communist Party, announced in Warsaw that Soviet support was "decisive" to the revolution.

I Question: Did the Communist Party play a significant part in the anti-Batista movement in Cuba?

It is reported that a communist, Dr. Antonio Muis Jimenez, is a member of the commission which is revising the history textbooks to be used in the Cuban public and private schools. Recognizing the communist skill in rewriting history books to meet the changing needs of the party line I would like to ask:

II Question: Do you believe that Dr. Muis is qualified to contribute to the improved accuracy and objectivity of Cuban history books?

III Question: Do you believe that Cuban communists give their first loyalty to their country rather than to the objectives of the international communist movement?

Porter When Dr. Castro spoke before the ASNE in Washington last month he explicitly declared that a free press in Cuba is the strongest support and the best guarantee of democracy there. Meanwhile, however, Castro as well as his top military commanders, Fidel Castro and "Che" Guevara, have sharply attacked newspapers and individuals who have criticized certain parts of his program, calling them counter-revolutionists and asking the public to boycott them.

Question: Do you believe that it is possible for a truly free press to function in the atmosphere created by actions of this nature?

Note: If substance from TCS 3/97,767 can be used, a question such as the following:

IV Question: Is the report true that Concepción Palacios and other Nicaraguan communists are being given facilities in Cuba to train a force to invade other Caribbean countries?

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Dr. Castro has said that the Communist Party will be allowed to exist and function just as any other political party. This sounds fine in theory but in practice the communists throughout the world have shown complete disregard for laws and legality, if necessary to secure a desired objective.

*V* Question: In view of the above situation do you feel that Dr. Castro should take any special steps or precautions to insure that the communists will not obtain positions of importance in his administration?

Question: Do you agree with the opinion recently expressed by Jules Dubois in a newspaper article that "Che" Guevara is a communist?

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